

Favors

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Summary: Red vs Blue. This is what takes place between when the Blues split up at episode 66. Before Tex trails Tucker and the others, and before Church finds himself in Blood Gulch, the two go on a side mission to investigate the status of O'Malley.

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\_(Takes place after episode 66)\_

"Ê|Tex? You're gone, aren't you." Private First Class Leonard L Church of the Blue Army asked. He waited for an answer he knew he wasn't going to get and sighed. "I really should have seen that coming." The self proclaimed blue squad leader turned around to confirm his suspicions, that the late freelancer was absent. He shook his head, then turned his attention towards the direction in which he saw the silhouettes of his teammates vanish to begin their quest. Confused that no black armor was fleeing in the direction, he turned again towards the complex. "Tex, where are you?" He said to himself.

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Tex came up to the area between the boulders at the top of the hill she was told about by the alien. A constant scowl was on her robotic face as she scanned the ground for evidence of a certain someone. She was not going to let it go.

"Tex. There you are. Why'd you take off so suddenly?" Church wondered, coming up behind her.

"Just remembered I had something to take care of." She responded, kneeling down between the rocks. Church knelt down next to her, mimicking her scan.

"Umâ€¦ what exactly are we looking for?" He wondered. Tex rolled her eyes, but then gasped, running to a smashed rocket launcher lying on the ground. She panicked, turning around searching the ground for any blood, finding none. A look of anger and fear spread across her face in her helmet.

"He's still alive." She whispered, barely loud enough for her ex-lover to hear. Finding a set of boot prints, she hastily followed the impressions towards the beach.

"What? Who's alive? Tex, wait up!" Church called out, trying to catch up to her. Tex slowed down to a jog as the prints entered the tide zone, where they had been washed away a while ago. Falling to her knees, she punched the wet sand in her frustration.

\_If only I hadn't been so distracted by that Alienâ€¦!\_ she cursed. Church finally caught up.

"Tex, what is this about?" He asked.

"O'Malley." She replied, bringing herself up off the ground. "O'Malley's still alive. I thought the alien had killed him like he did the robots, but he didn't." Church was silent for a moment. "He's not getting away this time."

"You want to go after him?" He asked.

"I'm going to go after him." She spat back. "I'm sorry, but you're on your own, Church."

Leonard grabbed her wrist as she began to take off. "Now hold on a minute, Tex. Tucker and Caboose have left, the Reds are god knows where, and you expect me to just stick around and listen to Gary's knock-knock jokes? Fuck that, I'm going with you."

"Good. Then let's stop jabbering and get going!" She exclaimed, trying to take off once more. Church wasn't letting go.

"Hey, Tex? You don't have much ammo, do you?" The freelancer stopped resisting his grasp and stood still as realization set in. "Listen, the big alien left us a huge resource in those dead robots. We should get as much materials as we can before taking off. Maybe even get ourselves some spare parts should our bodies get injured." He recommended. Tex cringed at the remembrance that she's dead. "Look, we don't know where he's gone, so a short delay isn't going to set us back. Besides, Doc's body might even be injured. We'll have a better chance against him fully loaded."

Tex grumbled as she realized he was right. She only had half a magazine left, and absolutely no sniper bullets. Her recklessness almost caused her to go against her hated AI with nothing. "Fine." She growled, snapping her wrist from Church's grasp and headed back towards the complex.

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Tex fumed as she gathered some more plasma grenades from the deactivated robots. While she was wasting her time, that AI was probably on his way to finding a better place to fortify. While Church had a point, if DuFresne's body \_was\_ injured, the sooner they struck the better. \_He doesn't understandâ€\_|\_ She thought. \_â€|typical.\_ She \_had\_ to make sure this AI was destroyed. It had caused her too much pain.

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\_Mrs. Allison hummed to herself as she set the table for Thanksgiving. She was so pleased that her adopted daughter was going to make it home from her busy schedule. Given, it was nothing fancy due to the constant lack of money, but at least the family would be home. A knock at the door caused her to rush to the front of their humble apartment. "Honey, I think Beth is home!" She exclaimed happily. Her husband grumbled in his drunken stupor. Mrs. Allison opened the door to the frozen expression of a black Spartan helmet. "Oh, I'm sorry sir. I was expecting somebody else."\_

\_The Spartan cocked its head to the side when the husband chirped up. "Who the hell is at the door?" He demanded, coming into view of the threshold. "What the hell are you doing here? Get out of my home!" He demanded, throwing his wife out of the way and throwing a drunken punch at the armored one.\_

Why is he attacking me? \_Tex thought, catching the punch. Her embedded training caused her to twist the arm and throw him back. Tex stepped into the residence and was just about to explain when her adopted father pressed the attack. That's when her AI kicked in.\_

Oh look. The drunken bastard's attacking. \_Tex, under Omega's influence, laughed\_. Better take care of this post haste. \_Before Tex knew it, there was a smoking gun in her hand, and a gaping hole in the chest of her father. Mrs. Allison looked in horror as her husband collapsed. In her defense, she clutched the carving knife. Still in her bit of aggression, the AI perceived this as another attack. Mrs. Allison didn't hold on to the knife for long as it was soon sticking out of her torso.\_

Tex closed her eyes in hurt as she remembered. The worst thing though, beyond the pleasure she received from the sight of blood, besides the dominating lust for inflicting pain she felt from her AI, is that after it was all done, her first thought was \_Damn. I'm not even getting paid for that.\_

There was no question about it. The AI was going to be destroyed.

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"Hey Gary, how's it going?" Church wondered as he entered the all-too-familiar computer room. After spending a millennia in it, it kind of felt a little cozy.

"Not bad, Church." It replied in its Steven Hawkings voice.

"Listen, Tucker and the others are going on some quest with the Alien."

"That is a relief." Gary stated. "I was afraid it was going to kill me like the prophecy predicted."

"Well you don't have anything to worry about then." He reassured. "Anyways, me and Tex are going to be going after that AI I told you about."

"Is it because you still secretly love her?" The computer mocked in his monotone voice.

"Shut up, already. I'm just going to make sure she's okay so that--"

"Hey Church. Knock knock." Church sighed.

"Who's there?" He growled.

"I deny my feelings for."

"I deny my feelings for who?"

"Tex, of course." Gary mocked, finishing up with his synthesized "Ha ha ha."

"Quit it. Listen, I'm just here to say goodbye in case anything happens. Also, if Tucker and the others come back, and we're not back yet, tell them to wait for us, okay?" Church commanded.

"You've got it, Church." Gary replied.

"Alright. Seeya later Gary."

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"What took you so long?" Tex questioned as she hauled her equipment down the beach.

"I was just leaving instructions for Gary in case Tucker gets back before us." Church replied. Tex inwardly smiled, knowing that Church often takes care of things others don't think about. As much as she didn't want to admit it, he is actually pretty responsible about those kind of things. "Think you have enough?" He laughed, indicating the size of Tex's newly accumulated arsenal.

"I'm just going to make sure he doesn't get away this time." She replied. "Fortunately we don't need food, water, or sleep, so we may catch up to him. DuFresne's body can't be that athletic." Church nodded in agreement as they headed down the most probable direction that Doc/O'Malley headed down. After a few miles of hiking in awkward silence, Church spoke up.

"So, Tex, though it's not really my business, why are you so bent on killing O'Malley? I mean, you came back from the dead to finish this

thing off."

"You're right. It is none of your business." She replied. Church shrugged, allowing the topic to die. "Why are you so bent on following me around?" She countered.

"Well, I spent a thousand years at that place, so I figured a change of pace was needed." He laughed. Tex looked at him.

"You mean you never left that place for the entire thousand years you were there?" She asked.

"Well, after the first few weeks, I learned that time flies by quicker in the spirit world, so I kinda abandoned my body from time to time, so I was only really there for a few years. But yeah. Gary's jokes eventually irritated me and I went on a little hike. You know, just to see what was out there." Tex turned to him.

"Church. Did you find any other structures? Anything O'Malley would head towards?" She wondered. Church took a moment to remember.

"Yeah, I did. Right in this direction, actually."

"COULD'VE MENTIONED THAT SOONER ASSHOLE!" She erupted.

"Calm down. That was eighteen hundred years ago. The thing probably isn't there anymore."

"The other one was." She replied. "Where did you find it? What was it?"

"It was just some glowing tower a few more miles down the beach." He reported. "There wasn't even anything there. Couldn't even find a way into the thing. Wasn't even that big of a tower." Tex looked through her sniper rifle, and put the zoom to max. Along the horizon, she could just make out the figure of a pillar.

"Okay then. That's where we're going."

"You're kidding me." Church began, taking off after the black armored Spartan. "That thing's still around? It's gotta be a relic by now." Tex rolled her eyes as she continued down the beach.

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Tex kept up her pace, moving quickly towards her objective with Church close behind. If they weren't possessing the same model of robot, she knew that she would've left him in the dust a long time ago. At least he had the sense to keep quiet and not try small talk. She's on an objective, and idle chit-chat just distracts her.

She has been doing that a lot lately. Getting distracted. Ever since O'Malley left her, she became herself again, which she was grateful for, but the boundless confidence and sharp senses were missed. And as her old self, she has become distracted. Distracted by the Alien, distracted by the Reds, distracted by Churchâ€|

She turned her head around to make sure to see if he was still there. He was trailing behind and to the left, hugging the tree line as they advanced down the beach. Either he was scanning the foliage in case of ambush, or he just wanted to be near cover if anything went down. Tex suspected the latter.

A tug on her foot and a clicking sounds beneath her caused her to snap her head in the direction of the disturbance. Next to her, a fragmentary grenade was triggered by a pull string she just tripped. "Oh \_crap!\_" she cried, ditching her gear and jumping and rolling away. She was just about to do another dive when the grenade detonated.

"Son of a \_bitch!\_" Church exclaimed, immediately scanning the beachhead and foliage for the attacker as he quickly made his way to the wounded freelancer. "Tex! TEX!" Church grabbed her arms and dragged her behind a nearby rock, then aimed his rifle down the beach. "Tex, you okay?"

Tex let herself recover from the blast and reorient herself. She looked up at Church, anxiously aiming at nothing. "It was a tripwire, Church. O'Malley suspected I'd follow him." Church let out a sigh, setting his weapon down.

"You look pretty beat up." He commented. "Anything damaged?" Tex looked at her robot body to make sure it was still functional. The upper torso still worked, so she used her hands to feel her legs. Her left leg was fine, but there was a rough patch on the back of her right thigh.

"My leg's not working correctly" She stated. Church knelt down next to her, gently lifting her calf to examine the wound.

"It's not too bad." He assessed. "It's mostly just armor damage. A few broken wires."

"Will you be able to repair it? I won't be able to see what I'm doing." She questioned. Church nodded.

"Shouldn't be too hard." He reassured. The woman sat up and scooted back up to the rock, leaning her back against it. She cursed herself and let her head fall back on the boulder.

"If he didn't know we were following him already, he sure does now" Church gathered some spare equipment from their supplies and knelt down in front of her.

"Don't worry about it. Let him be the one worrying. I sure wouldn't want to be stalked by you." He joked. Tex couldn't help but let out a chuckle. Church lifted her leg, letting her ankle rest on his shoulder as he began repairing her body.

Due to her immobility, all Tex could do is sigh and watch the Blue squad leader work. It was a weird feeling, actually. Whenever Church touched her. Maybe it was because they were both spirits in borrowed bodies. But whenever he touched her, she felt alive again. Like it was really Church's flesh brushing against hers. It was a feeling she missed deep down ever since she became a spirit. Consciously, she resented it, mostly because it was that idiot that got her involved in the first place, and only \_he\_ could provide the touch. That

intoxicating, gentle, warm touch.

Church snapped her out of trance when he spoke. "So, if O'Malley knows we're coming, what's his likely course of action?" He asked as he continued working. "Would he turn around and hit us straight on? He is programmed to be aggressive."

"Yeah, but he's also very smart. He's most likely going to establish his defenses in that tower thing as he did with Gary's facility." She predicted. "We're in for one hell of a struggle."

"Yeah, but what do we have to lose? We're already dead." Church chuckled.

"â€|Stop it, Church."

"Stop what?"

"Reminding me." She scowled. "It really wasn't my plan to get killed."

Church grew angry himself. "Oh? And what \_was \_your plan? Get rich and kill stuff for fun?"

"No! Wellâ€| maybe. "

"And what's your plan now? What will you do once we kill O'Malley? What will a dead freelancer do with her time?"

"It's \_your fault\_ I'm dead!" She exclaimed. Church cringed as Tex kind of wished she hadn't just said that.

"Look, some things are just meant to happen, no matter what you do, or how many times you try. It wasn't entirely my fault we died. Or ended up here."

"How many times?" Tex quoted, confused. "Back on sidewinder, I thought I saw two of you at onceâ€|"

Church hung his head. "Yeah. Actually there were a lot more of me there. I tried to keep the bomb from going off. Multiple times. It never worked." Tex was silent. "It made me realized that no matter how many times or how hard you try to make something happen, things will always turn out how they're meant to be."

"â€|And how many times did you try to stop me from dying?" She wondered.

"Too many to count." He mumbled. Tex thought of accusing his failure as a result of his incompetence, but she knew better. Even an idiot would've gotten it right eventually. Church finished the repairs and tapped the bottom of her thigh. "There."

"â€| Thanks."

The duo continued down the beach, taking more caution in their approach. Tex's leg worked fine, but something else was bothering her, and she couldn't tell what. It wasn't something like a dangerous foreboding, it wasâ€| an unfamiliar uncertainty about something. Not really that bad, but still annoying. Another distraction.

Great.

They were getting closer to the relic when Church noticed something. "Hey Texâ€¦ there are ramps on the side there. They didn't use to be thereâ€¦ I think we could get inside."

"Then so could O'Malley." Tex calculated. She set her sniper scope on high and scanned the area. "I don't see himâ€¦ but there are footprints entering the facility." She reported. "I figure we throw in a bunch of grenades, and when he comes rushing out, we shoot him."

"What? No!" Church exclaimed.

"Why not? You worried about that wimp he's taken over?"

"No, Tex, listen. We don't know who else is around. O'Malley could just exit Dufresne and find someone else, then we're back to square one!" He explained. Tex averted her eyes. "We have to find a way to take out Doc's helmet radio. The we'll get rid of him, just like when he was in Caboose. He'll be stuck. With us."

Why was this happening? How could she be slipping? Tex was a little frustrated at her own incompetence. Again, her rashness would've let that murderous AI slip through her fingers again. She smiled slightly, grateful that Church was here to help. Not that she needed it, of courseâ€¦

Damn. There was that weird uncertainty again.

"Only problem is, we'd need to get close enough to him to break his radio." Church thought out loud. They both took a few moments to brainstorm possible solutions. "How about this? One of us leaves our bodies behind and scouts out the facility, and the other stays here pulling security on the other in case O'Malley finds us."

"Sounds good. I'll go." She volunteered. "You stay here, I'll be right back." Tex left her body, letting it collapse like a rag doll. "Oh and Church? Don't try to warn him that I'm coming." She spat, still angry about his initial betrayal to the Reds.

The deceased freelancer made her way into the complex, navigating it's corridors to find the AI. \_I don't like this setup\_. She said to herself. Too many barriers to hide behind. She thought she heard footsteps around a bend and went to investigate. \_O'Malley could pop up any-\_\_

Just then, Doc/O'Malley turned the corner Tex was approaching, and she accidentally phased into him, entering Dufresne's mindscape. \_Shit!\_ She cursed, trying to find a way out. After a short panic session, she calmed herself down and surveyed her surroundings. Dufresne's mind was a large field of flowers with wildlife happily chirping along. The mind of a pacifist. Ugh. Along the horizon, however, she could see the dark abyss that could only be O'Malley's influence.

"But I don't \_want\_ you to use my genetic material! My parents gave it to me!" Doc whined.

"Quiet, fool! With this technology, I will be able to create a legion



of drones to do my bidding! All will be crushed under me." O'Malley laughed maniacally.

\_The gang's all hereâ€¦\_ Tex sighed and moved in for a closer look. Why hadn't O'Malley taken over by now? Tex looked around then realized why. There were no weapons in Dufresne's mind. And seeing Doc and the AI, Dufresne was on a plateau with unclimbable sides, so O'Malley had no way to get to him. Lucky guy. Allison went over her options. She could try to phase out and get Churchâ€¦ or she could end this. "Church would just be a distraction anyway." She deduced. "O'MALLEY!"

The diabolical artificial intelligence snapped his head towards the new intruder in Dufresne's mind. "Oh, it's you. I heard you enjoyed my little gift." He laughed evilly.

"You're going down, O'Malley." The freelancer sneered, charging the AI. O'Malley calmly faced his former host, waiting for her approach. With a quick knee to the stomach, the AI knocked the wind out of the freelancer, using her momentum to flip her over and slam her onto the ground. Tex coughed once, then narrowly missed a stomped foot aimed at her throat by rolling to the side.

"You fool! This plane may be lacking in weaponry, but I don't need any to crush the likes of you!" O'Malley laughed, kicking Tex across the side. She grunted in discomfort, quickly regaining a standing position and threw a punch at the program. O'Malley staggered back, and the two charged at each other in ferocious battle.

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"Oh, you gotta be freakin' \_kidding me!\_" Church cursed as his sniper scope followed Tex into the complex. She had just made her way up the ramps and was negotiating the walls when he saw her turn a corner just as O'Malley came into view. The two merged, and O'Malley's body stood still. He knew what that meant. Cursing again, he made his way towards the complex.

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Tex spat profanity as she was thrown closer to the endless abyss O'Malley had infected Doc's mind with. "Are you okay, miss?" Doc cried out in apology from the safety of his plateau. She growled, getting up once ore to face her hated opponent, only to be once more smacked away.

"Foolish moron! Did you actually expect to defeat me without weaponry?" the AI mocked. "I shall crush your soul into dustâ€¦" Tex looked up to see his arms raise up, ready to smash down and crack open her head when a flash of shining blue armor came across her field of vision.

"Forget it, O'Malley!" Church yelled, delivering a blow across the program's face. Kneeing the core, O'Malley was thrown by the force a few yards away. Tex found herself unable to look away from Church as he extended his hand to her to help her up. Regaining her composure

(and proper reputation) she slapped the extended hand aside and brought herself up. "What part of 'scouting mission' don't you understand?" Church demanded.

"Shut up. I was doing fine without you." She shot back.

"Oh, sure. Juuuuust fine." He rolled his eyes just before getting tackled by the malicious AI.

"I didn't ask for your help, you know!" Tex shouted as Church and O'Malley gripped hands and rolled along the flowered ground trying to get an upper hand on the other.

"Oh yeah. It was clear you were handling the situation well." He cursed, engaged it battle with O'Malley. The freelancer sneered, slamming her first down on a nearby grazing buck in frustration. The force broke the deer's neck and it fell to the ground with a dull thud. Tex eyed the dead animal, and the full head of antlers, and came up with an idea.

"So the little lapdog has come to his master's aide!" O'Malley chuckled, straddling Church as his fists slammed down on the private's helmet. Church did his best to block the blows, but was finding himself in a losing situation. Eventually, his helmet cracked, and O'Malley ripped it off his face. Bringing his fists together and raising his arms, he prepared to deliver the finishing blow to Church.

However, a sudden set of antlers imbedded in his core prevented this from happening, as Tex had just swung the severed head of a buck with all her might into the body of the program. Circuitry sparked from the holes in his armor as O'Malley looked in disbelief at his wounds.

"What is this?" He demanded, then found a well aimed foot smash across his chin, knocking him off Church. Tex snapped off the other antler she used as a handle in the initial blow, and swung it down, stabbing O'Malley across the back of his shoulders. More cracks snaked along his armor, when Church grabbed his ankle, spinning him around like an Olympic event hammer, throwing his battered and broken body over the cliff into the dark abyss.

Tex and Church looked at each other, not knowing quite what to say. Allison noticed that his helmet was off, and since they were in Doc's mindscape, he appeared to be in his own flesh. She also noticed his eyes, those same eyes she always gazed into all those years ago. Snapping herself out of her gaze, she spoke in a harsh voice.

"Did you remember to knock out Doc's radio?" She demanded.

"Of course. Not all of us are so anxious to go into battle before completing simple tasks, Tex." He shot back.

"Oh excuse me, but not all of us are afraid to fight!"

"What's your problem?"

"STOP FIGHTING!" Dufresne shouted from his plateau. The duo looked up at him. "Can't you two just be grateful for helping each other out?"

"â€| "

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"Shut up, Doc." They both said at once and began bickering once more.

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"So exactly \_what\_ does this thing do?" Church wondered, examining the machine Dufresne showed them. Both him and Tex eventually phased out of Doc's mindscape and back into their robot bodies.

"Apparently it's a cloning device. Some alien society probably used it to make armies." Tex looked the device over.

"And O'Malley wanted to use it to make his own army?" The freelancer deduced.

"Yes. He was going to use my genetic material to make clones of myself. Only thing is, he couldn't quite figure out how to program the biological clones to have the necessary intelligence and personality he wanted."

"Program?" Church wondered.

"In a senseâ€| We found that though it will produce a biological body, the product is almost like a blank shell. No advanced brain functionality. We used it on a rat first."

"Ah. So it produces comatose soldiers. How wonderful." Tex grumbled. Church considered this for a second, then got an idea.

"Hey, Docâ€| did you need the entire animal to make a clone?"

"No, all we had was some fur from it. But the ends of the hairs still had the animal's DNA, so we were able to reconstruct the entire animal. Why do you ask?" Dufresne inquired. Tex turned her head towards Church, who would be grinning like mad if he had a mouth.

"And you can operate the machine without O'Malley's help?"

"Yesâ€| but why would I?" He wondered, when church pulled out two small capsules from his pack.

"What're you up to, Church?" Tex demanded.

"Well, we're able to possess bodies, as long as they're alive right?" He reminded, voice somewhat smug. "If we used this machine, we would have live bodies to use." Tex shot up, excited.

"We'd be alive again!"

"In a manner of speaking." Church replied. "When I went back to the past, I kept a small capsule of our blood. Easy enough, as bits of us were scattered everywhereâ€|" he grumbled, recollecting how they each died in violent explosions.

"What kind of freak keeps blood?" Tex mocked. Church would've rolled his eyes, and handed the small containers to Doc.

"We'll need one clone of each of these samples." Dufresne smiled, and got to work loading the first one.

"I'm going to have a body again!" Tex thought aloud, liking the sound of it more and more. She yearned for the ability to feel, the ability to taste again. Doc worked intently on the computer for a moment, and the chamber next to it hissed a dense fog as it opened, revealing a naked bald Church lying on the table.

Tex had seen Church before, although this time she couldn't seem to stop admiring his form. Sensing that Church was looking at her, she tried to cover her attraction. "Where's his belly button?" She wondered.

"This body was created. Bellybuttons are from bodies that're born." Doc explained, scanning the newly formed body. "All vitals seem normal, Church. Feel free to hop in."

"Hey, how come you get to go first?" Tex complained.

"It is my body!" Church replied.

"Sorry, miss. The samples weren't labeled. You'll just have to wait your turn" Church took the opportunity to phase into the newly created body and took his first breath in a long time. He got off the table as it slid back into the chamber, creating Tex's body. The blue squad leader took a short while to work his muscles, remembering the feel of having an endocrine system.

"You gonna be naked from now on then?" The freelancer teased. Church considered making a snide remark to that, but since he didn't want his new body killed so soon, he went to his old robot form and began stripping the armor from it. The squad leader was just able to get the pants on when Tex's body was ready.

"Alright Church. Leave for a minute." She instructed. Church smirked, getting the hint. "You too, Doc." She snapped.

"Don't you want to make sure the body's okay?" He wondered.

"I'll take my chances." She chuckled, shooing the out of the room. Dufresne followed Church out of the room as Allison opened the chamber. She took a moment to bask in her own presence. Sure, her new body was bald, but her fiery red hair will eventually grow out into a manageable style. She abandoned the robot shell and dove back into the biological creation, snapping her eyes open and deeply inhaling her first breath in a long time. It felt good to be alive.

Tex slipped her last gauntlet on when she picked up her helmet and held it against her hip, exiting the room. "Alright, done." She announced to the boys. Church likewise had his armor back on, but decided to keep the helmet off for a little while longer to enjoy the fresh air.

"You see, guys can pull off the whole bald thing. Women? Not so much." Church jarred. Dufresne ran a quick scan on the body.

"Seems like it's in perfect health, missâ€¦" He announced. Church slung his sniper rifle over his arm.

"So what now, Tex?" He wondered, looking out into the distance. The freelancer shrugged.

"Don't know. Now that O'Malley's gone, I don't really have anything to do."

"Gonna go back to freelance work?" He wondered, trying not to sound too disappointed. Tex considered her options.

"If something comes up. In the meantime, the only thing I desire is that reward Tucker's gonna get." She smiled. Church grinned.

"Yeah, it wouldn't hurt those guys if you kept an eye on 'em. At least until its over. I don't trust that alien too much."

"How about you?" Doc wondered. "I could use some help trying to establish a medical facility hereâ€¦"

"Thanks, but no thanks, Doc. The Reds took off in a hurry. Something about a distress call, if Andy was right. Gotta see what they're up to."

"Well, then, if you need me, you know my number. It'll probably take me a while to repair my helmet radio, so use the phone line they have here." Church nodded, taking the card with the contact information.

"Let's get going, then." Tex said. "Even though Tucker is really slow, it's gonna be hard to catch up." Church nodded and began to backtrack on the path back to Zanzibar and Gary.

"Take care, Doc. See you later." He said, waving goodbye. Dufresne waved back.

"Oh, we'll meet again, you can be sure of that, you fool." He grinned under his breath, and chuckled softly as they took off.

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Tex and Church didn't say much on their way back to Zanzibar. There was an awkward silence in the air as they made their way back, helmets slung on their hips. They were just so relieved to finally be alive, they wanted to enjoy the sights, smells, and sounds of the sunset over the ocean as the water sloshed against the shore. Tex would occasionally glance over at her ex, her new heart fluttering with forgotten feelings. And, as much as she despised to admit it, she was enjoying the feel.

She sighed audibly once they arrived at the windmill. Tucker and the others' tracks were still visible, as were the tracks from the warthog driven by the Reds. Church took a knee, propping his sniper rifle against a rock as he examined the wheel marks. "So looks like this is where we split." He announced.

"Guess soâ€|" Tex agreed, looking out over the distance where Tucker took of long before. Church was just about to take his first step when Tex knew what she wanted to do. "Church, waitâ€|" she called. He turned around just as the freelancer caught him in a forceful kiss. The Blue leader was a bit surprised, but let himself enjoy the affection. "That was for helping me out." She whispered against his lips. He began to grin when she suddenly forced a swift knee to his groin. He winced, doubling over in pain. "And \_that's\_ for just about everything else!" She announced triumphantly. Church stayed doubled over in pain as Tex grabbed her gear and started heading off/

"Bitchâ€|" He grumbled under his breath.

"Asshole." Tex mumbled with a playful smile across her face.

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file.